

Stuntney Scrapbook 1897 to 1990

Facts, Features and (occasional) Fallacies
reported in Cambridge Newspapers

summarised by

Mike Petty

Many of these stories were featured in my 'Looking Back' column in the Cambridge News from 1996-2014. They are supplemented by some selections 'From our Old Files' published in the Cambridge Independent Press and other notes.

The complete 'Cambridgeshire Scrapbook' of which this is a small section is published online at bit.ly/CambsCollection

I have digital and other copies of most of the stories summarised.
I hope to publish these online one day. If you would like them in the meantime then please get in touch.

The original volumes are housed in the Cambridgeshire Collection at Cambridge Central Library where there are many other indexes dating back to 1770.

They also have detailed newspaper cuttings files on over 750 topics that have been compiled since the 1960s.

Newspapers sometimes get things wrong. I copy things out incorrectly. Do check

There are a multitude of spelling and layout errors. Please forgive or correct them

News never stops but this file was finished on 31 August 2016.

I will maintain supplements and corrections – contact me for anything you need

Please make what use of these notes that you may. Kindly remember where they came from

See my website – www.mikepetty.org.uk for further notes.

Mike Petty, Stretham

2016

1904 02 17

Sir – owing to the recent heavy rains the road from Ely High Bridge to the opposite bank has been submerged for some time. Why does not the Council raise the road, providing tunnels underneath to carry the water away? This would render the approaches less dangerous for vehicular traffic. I am told the road is a private one but the Ely Urban Council lights the bridge and fences the road in times of floods by chains. Why not go farther and place a man and boat there day and night at the public expense also. I have heard it suggested that a temporary platform might be erected by the side of the post for foot passengers – T. Burns, Stuntney

1904 11 07

Damage was sustained at Quay caused by youths who cherished a desire to celebrate the 'Fifth' in a manner more realistic than by a common pyrotechnics display. A stack of mustard seed on Caius Farm provided the fuel for a blaze and was utterly destroyed. Stacks on the Stuntney Road at Ely also caught fire. It was noticed by some boys standing on the High Bridge who conveyed the news to the Railway Station from where a telephone message was immediately dispatched to the Police Station and the Fire Brigade quickly summoned. But the fire had got a firm hold and the six stacks formed a great blaze that could be seen for miles around.

1907 08 06

An important sale of pedigree hackneys and harness horses, the property of Mr Cole Ambrose, was held at Stuntney Hall. It included 24 piebalds and skewbalds and it is doubtful if so many horses of this old-fashioned strain have ever before been offered. Good prices were realised, the average being £32 with one stallion bought by A.B. Hulbert of Greenley, U.S.A. for 66 guineas 07 08 06

1909 07 16

The news of the death of Charles Cole Ambrose of Barway was received at Ely with the deepest feelings of regret and quite a gloom was cast over Soham where he was particularly well-known. He was a son of Cole Ambrose of Stuntney the best-known agriculturalist in the Eastern Counties and reputed to be the largest wheat-grower in England. He will be greatly missed in the neighbourhood of Fordy Farm where he was regarded as a good master and a kind and genial gentleman. CWN 09 07 16

1911 09 15

Mr Edwin Saunders had 30 head of cattle on his farm at Nornea. An old cole seed straw stack stood nearly in the centre of the field and the beasts, by rubbing away the sides, had made a mushroom-shaped shelter. When the thunderstorm broke out most of the cattle retreated to the trees but one, a black cow, was huddled against the stack. Lightning struck the stack, firing it and killing the cow instantaneously. So fierce was the heat that it was impossible to drag it clear of the flames. Huge pieces of burning material were blown a considerable distance, some going right over the roof of the farmhouse. A great number of people flocked to the scene from Stuntney and Ely 11 09 15d

1914 11 27

Stuntney vicar Mowbray Smith leaves, Cole Ambrose made a gift of Institute to parish and he would give furniture and effects

1914 12 04

Stuntney church hall presented by Ambrose, vicar thanks for leaving gifts

1915 09 03

Stuntney Rumsey wounded in head

1921 05 18

Cole Ambrose Stuntney Hall dies – 21 05 18

1922 09 21

At Ely Urban District Council the advisability of disposing of the Nutholt Close for the purposes of dwelling-houses was considered. They had a programme for 200 houses but of these 20 were erected in Ely and 8 at Stuntney - a meagre quantity. The chairman commented; "Some of the tenders for the houses to be erected on the Prickwillow site are ridiculous". Prices per pair ranged from F. Tucker of Ely at £400, whilst F. Ambrose quoted £750, Hobbs & son of Downham £906.10s.2d and F.W. Edwards of Prickwillow £1,500. A list of houses in Prickwillow to which water was supplied from the new main was laid before the meeting. The committee recommended that in all cases where there was not a sufficient supply of wholesome water on the premises that notices be served to make the necessary connections in order to obtain a supply

1925 08 12

Ely was nearly dry from noon on Monday to 11am Tuesday owing to the city's water supply from Isleham having been held up through the bursting of a main at Stuntney, where water spouted two feet into the air. Residents were warned by Mr R. Wayman, the city's blind crier, that water should be used carefully. The lower part of Ely was more fortunate as the reservoir on Cambridge Road contained 80,000 gallons. This was run off at slow pressure and they were kept supplied until about 7

1926 06 10

A large bus belonging to Messrs Bowyer and Topper of Ely was returning from the Soham Grammar School sports, and was filled with Ely citizens, mostly ladies. Some distance from Stuntney a motor lorry, proceeding in the same direction, made an attempt to pass. The bus driver pulled off to the left but the lorry drove too close, knocking the hub of one of the wheels off. The bus turned to the left and rushed into the dyke, falling on to its left side with its radiator embedded in the bank. The occupants were in a serious plight with seats collapsing and broken glass flying about in all directions. Most of the ladies suffered from shock and it will be some time before they will recover from it

1926 06 30

Last Sunday was observed as Feast Sunday at Stuntney when £14 10s.3d. and 457 eggs were collected for Addenbrooke's Hospital by the villagers. This is an extremely creditable effort in view of the small population. This year a horse-drawn wagon was decorated with evergreens and flowers by members of the Mothers' Union. The vehicle, which was lent by Mr Ambrose and driven by Walter Fretwell, represented a hospital ward. A procession headed by the church choir marched through the village singing hymns

1926 07 07

Ely Burial Board received a letter to say that the Privy Council had passed an order closing Stuntney churchyard. Its care and maintenance transferred to the Parochial Church Council who could recover the cost from the overseers. But they thought that as the Burial Board was used to the work they would ask them to undertake it. It could be done by those who did the work at the cemetery. This was agreed. The renovation of the cemetery was being proceeded with satisfactorily.

1934 05 14

Stuntney Village Institute was destroyed by fire. The blaze was fought by villagers but it was one mass of flames and it was useless to attempt to save it. Built by the late Cole Ambrose, the building was of wood and corrugated iron. It was the centre of social life in the village and the whole of the contents, with the exception of a piano, were lost. A stove, a relic of Queen Victoria's yacht 'Osbourne', was destroyed together with a billiards table, whist table and chairs. The Billiards Championship Cup was discovered twisted and broken in the debris 34 05 14

1940 11 01

Nazis Surrender to Woman. — When a Junkers 88 bomber was shot down: at Stuntney, near Ely, on Wednesday afternoon, two occupants, aged about 18 to 20, threw down their revolvers and gave

themselves up to a woman, who was the first person on the scene. The two other members of the crew, who had baled out by parachute, were captured in Soham Fen and taken to Newmarket. The machine had been badly damaged by R.A.F. fighters and was finished off by another fighter. The Nazi pilot crashed on Mr. Owen Ambrose's farm at Quanea Fen. Later, Mr. Ambrose told a reporter "The plane touched down in a ploughed field, jumped a ditch and came to rest in a beet field. The first person on the scene was Mrs. Ashman, who lives at the farm. As she approached the two men, they emptied their revolvers and threw them away. Other men from the farm came up and the Germans were driven away in a lorry by Mr. Brooks." The two who baled out were uninjured.

1943 08 19

Home Guard killed in accident at Stuntney – 43 08 19a

1959 08 21

Miss E.A. Ogden, has safely delivered, unaided, 50 babies a year since she came to Ely in 1939 – about one a week. The tiniest weighed only 3lb, the biggest was 11lb. One of two district nurses covering Witchford, Stuntney and Adelaide, Miss Ogden is quite modest about the whole affair. She points out that it is quite commonplace for midwives to deal with so many youngsters. But six Ely doctors gave a party in the grounds of Dr J.B. Bamford's home to celebrate the milestone. 59 08 21a

1964 05 07

Stuntney villagers are terrified by night drivers: screeching brakes and screaming tyres as traffic rounds the sharp bend at the top of the hill at too fast a speed have become a regular part of the night life. There is a gaping hole in the church wall which has been hit three times in the last four years. Now they have written to Ely Council asking for the street light on the bend to be kept on all night. – 64 05 07

1965 01 07

Stuntney horses in snowy landscape photo – 65 01 07a

1968 10 05

Harvest with horses, Stuntney – photo – 68 10 05

1981 11 04

Shock new proposals to change the face of education in the Ely area have emerged in a secret report. It suggests closure of five more schools at Little Ouse, Stuntney, Prickwillow, Black Horse Drove and St Audrey's, Ely together with Bedford House further education centre. At Littleport the Village College buildings would become a new county primary school. 81 11 04

1986 12 19

The new 2.5 km Stuntney bypass, part of the A142 Fen Link Road project, was opened ahead of schedule. It has been constructed using the latest road-building techniques to ensure it does not sink into the soft peat. This was a recurring problem with the former stretch of causeway which was all ups and downs, like a Jollity Farm. Now special bitumen binders have been used to give more flexibility with nylon reinforcement to add strength. 86 12 19